
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5733

AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO DEATH CERTIFICATES.

SUMMARY:

This bill:

1. prohibits issuance of uncertified copies of death certificates less than 100 years old,
2. limits who can receive certified copies of death certificates less than 100 years old, and
3. requires that specified people who can currently request a certified copy instead receive a “certificate of death registration” (hereafter referred to as a “short form”),
4. establishes a \$15 fee for the short form, and
5. makes technical changes.

As under current law, only certain people have access to the decedent’s social security number (SSN) and information contained in the death certificate’s “administrative purposes” section (e.g., the decedent’s race, educational level, and occupation)(see BACKGROUND).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2013

SHORT FORMS AND CERTIFICATES

Current law allows anyone age 18 or older to request and receive a certified copy of a death certificate less than 100 years old. Instead, the bill requires town clerks and the Department of Public Health to issue a short form to requestors unless the person is (1) listed on the certificate (e.g., the funeral director, embalmer, conservator, physician, or town clerk); (2) the surviving spouse or next of kin; (3) a researcher;

(4) an authorized state or federal agency; or (5) in need of the certificate to determine or protect a personal or property right.

For the people ineligible to receive a short form, the bill does not explicitly authorize but appears to allow them to receive a certified copy.

Under the bill, the short form must include only the decedent's name and gender as well as the cause, date, and place of death. A person issued a short form is prohibited from accessing any other information in the death certificate.

BACKGROUND

Restrictions On Access To Certain Information

For deaths occurring after July 1, 1997, (1) only the surviving spouse or next of kin can access the decedent's SSN and administrative purposes section and (2) any researcher requesting a certified copy of a death certificate can access the administrative purposes section with the decedent's SSN redacted.

For deaths occurring after December 31, 2001, the decedent's SSN is recorded in the administrative purposes section which can also be accessed by the people listed on the death certificate, but only to process the certificate.

Related Bill

HB 5421, reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, exempts death certificates of minors from public disclosure except to certain public agencies, immediate family members, and funeral directors, for a period of six months after the minor's death.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 21 Nay 7 (04/05/2013)